

01789

1967/07/05



~~TOP SECRET~~
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

CONF JS
JCSM-382-67

5 July 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Demilitarization of the DMZ and a Bombing
Halt in North Vietnam (S)

1. (S) Reference is made to:

a. Your memorandum, dated 20 June 1967, subject as above, which forwarded a State Department memorandum on the above subject and which requested the comments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff thereon.

b. JCSM-648-66, dated 10 October 1966, subject: "Proposals for a New International Control Commission for Supervision of a Peace Treaty in Vietnam (S)."

c. JCSM-107-67, dated 27 February 1967, subject: "A Settlement of the Conflict in Vietnam (U)."

d. JCSM-286-67, dated 20 May 1967, subject: "Operations Against North Vietnam (U)."

e. JCSM-288-67, dated 20 May 1967, subject: "Worldwide US Military Posture (U)."

f. JCSM-312-67, dated 2 June 1967, subject: "Air Operations Against NVN (U)."

2. (TS) In response to your request in reference 1a, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have studied the memorandum by the Department of State and the Canadian proposal upon which it rests. Their views are expressed in detail in the Appendix and Annexes hereto. In summary, these views are:

a. A prerequisite for an effective international control commission (ICC) force is the organization of an ICC free of the existing deficiencies described in reference 1b. It

OATS(DPA)DFOISR32
TOP SECRET CONTROL
Copy No. *Original*
Case No. *94-F-532*
T.S. No. *94-15-04*
Document No. *17*

Copy *7* of *35* copies each
of *3* pages series. A.

~~TOP SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.8

9-22
By *WJD 941103*
Date *5/17/91*

GROUP 3
Downgraded at 12 year
intervals; not
automatically declassified

941103-357

~~TOP SECRET~~

should be noted that, historically, ICCs have been ineffective. Assuming an acceptable ICC can be formed, the key factor in determining the composition of an ICC force for the demilitarized zone (DMZ), when linked with a proposal for cessation of US bombing in North Vietnam (NVN), is whether it should be capable of preventing, by force if necessary, violations of the DMZ or whether it should be only a detecting and reporting organization. In the absence of demonstrated good faith among the belligerents and with a mission of preventing violations of the DMZ, the Joint Chiefs of Staff estimate that a force built around the equivalent of three US divisions, with appropriate tactical air support, would be required. This force could be reduced to brigade size if good faith were demonstrated.

b. An effectively closed DMZ would limit the maneuver room of North Vietnamese Army/Viet Cong (NVA/VC) units in the northern portion of the I CTZ and might permit the deployment of some US/Free World forces to more critical areas in the I CTZ. However, it would also permit NVA/VC forces to intensify their efforts in the more difficult terrain along the Laotian border.

c. Reference 1c describes the conditions which should attend a halt of the bombing in NVN. Prominent among the criteria is "... a cessation by NVN of its infiltration of personnel and materiel into SVN and Laos" Closure of the DMZ would eliminate some infiltration routes but would not have a significant over-all effect on infiltration. Routes through Laos and Cambodia and Vietnamese coastal waters would still be available to the communists. Thus, the military value of an effectively closed DMZ would be limited.

d. Air operations against NVN are an essential element of the US strategy in Southeast Asia. The Canadian proposal will in no way alter this requirement. In references 1d, 1e, and 1f, the Joint Chiefs of Staff describe the need for an expanded air campaign against NVN, designed to reduce drastically its ability to continue the war. If adopted, the Canadian proposal would require the United States to abandon this portion of its military strategy, and an important "blue chip" negotiating asset would be forfeited without commensurate gain.

e. With respect to certain other US programs in Southeast Asia, the Canadian proposal would:

~~TOP SECRET~~

941103-355

~~TOP SECRET~~

(1) Eliminate the requirement for that portion of ILLINOIS CITY in South Vietnam and result in increased NVN pressure on that portion designed for emplacement in Laos.

(2) Increase the importance of PRAIRIE FIRE.

(3) Probably force the cessation of that portion of SEA DRAGON operations involving naval bombardment of targets ashore.

(4) Probably make justification of continued bombing in Laos more difficult.

f. Weather and seasonal factors are relevant only to the timing of the proposal. Political events will also affect the timing. If an approach is to be made to Hanoi, the least undesirable time for implementation of the proposal would be after the national elections in South Vietnam but taking into account the timing of monsoon weather in Laos, at the DMZ, and in NVN (see Annex H).

3. (TS) In consideration of the foregoing, the Joint Chiefs of Staff conclude that to halt combat air operations against NVN in exchange for effective closing of the DMZ is clearly disadvantageous to the United States and its Allies, and they recommend that the Canadian proposal not be adopted.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



EARLE G. WHEELER
Chairman

Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachments

~~TOP SECRET~~

941103-356